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the direction in which they start. Mr. Endicott asks if any one have ever known them to turn to the left? In answer to his enquiry, I would like to have it distinctly understood, that in both the cases mentioned above, *the holes turned to the left.* I have sometimes found a nest of grass and sticks, but not usually. Mr. Wood says the eggs are about seven in number. I have found as many as eleven eggs in a nest, but never more than that.—C. E. WILLIAMS, *Utica, N. Y.*

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GEOLOGY.

THE IOWA DRIFT.—Since my announcement, at the late meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Chicago, of having traced up to their original ledges in North-western Iowa, and the adjacent parts of Dakota and Minnesota, the red quartzite boulders of the drift of Western Iowa, I have had the additional pleasure of following up, to its original home, much of the granite also, which is profusely scattered in the Iowa drift.

These observations of granite *in situ*, were confined to the immediate vicinity of the Minnesota river, and indeed to the bottom of its valley alone, but extending a distance of about thirty miles, being from a point a few miles below Fort Ridgley, to the mouth of the Red-wood river. These rocks, although evidently belonging to one continuous mass, are quite variable in texture and proportions of composition, even within a short distance. The prevailing color is reddish, from the great preponderance of feldspar of that color. Hornblende is always present, and sometimes preponderating to such an extent that limited portions have the characteristics of hornblendic slate. Mica is not always discernible, but can usually be detected. The quartz is mostly in small granular crystals, and is evidently the origin of a portion of the drift sands of that region. Indistinct lines of stratification can often be seen in these rocks, and they not unfrequently present the characters of gneiss. The rocks are found in place only in the river valley, for the reason that the whole region is covered deeply with drift, with a prairie surface, having a very distinct general level, down from which the river has eroded its valley during the unnumbered post-glacial centuries, down to these underlying rocks. The valley now presents the appearance of a huge, well-defined, slightly tortuous ditch, about a mile wide, and something more than one hundred feet deep. Thus, as one travels over the prairie surface of the region, he sees nothing of these rocks *in situ*, but in the bottom of the valley he finds frequent large exposures of granitic rocks as characteristic as those of New England. As might be inferred from the great preponderance of feldspar and hornblende, these rocks readily disintegrate, much more so in fact than common limestone, and at the mouth of the Red-wood there are large exposures of them, reaching a hundred feet in thickness, yet in place and undisturbed, but so thoroughly decomposed, that one can crush it in his hand to the condition of ordinary soil, like that described by Professor Agassiz, as composing the Organ mountains, near Rio Janeiro. It is evidently from this source that much of the soil and fine material of the drift of Iowa and Minnesota are derived. New England did not derive such a soil from her granites, although they contain all the elements of good soil, because their texture did not allow of their ready disintegration, while the glaciers were passing over them, as those of Minnesota did. Thus the great superiority of the soil of the North-west over that of New England, is due to the fact that the rocks of the whole region—granites, sandstones and limestones—were more easily disintegrated and ground.—C. A. WHITE.

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ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. C. F., Eastham, Mass.—The "silver witches," which you say is the common name for them with you, is probably the *Lepisma saccharina* Linn. It is found in damp houses, in closets, among books, and is injurious to silks and silken tapestry, we are informed by a lady living in Salem. You write "that they seem to choose the darkness, and move from one room to another by night. A wicker basket, that had been laid aside for some time, was found to contain quite a population of them. Hundreds were scalded out of it. I send one or two pieces from the basket, showing their work." We are surprised to find the Lepisma accused of doing damage by boring into wood-work, not suspecting an insect, with such a flattened and weak body, capable of boring cylindrical holes in soft wood, though it has powerful jaws.

————, Portsmouth, N. H.—In answer to your query whether the Greenland Saxifraga is a variety of S. Pensylvanica, we would say that we cannot guess at Greenland or any other Saxifrages (or any other plants at all for that matter); there are too many of them to make it a profitable employment.

L. A. M., Glen Falls, N. Y.—The caterpillars are the young of *Papilio Asterias*, the Parsnip Butterfly. The v-shaped horns thrown out from behind the head, are supposed to be organs of protection.

L. B. C., Richmond, Ind., writes that "on Monday, the 27th of April, 1868, the children found a Luna-moth (*Tropæa Luna*) under a beech tree. They brought it in, and I placed it under a glass disk, with beach, maple, and currant leaves, neither of which, however, did it eat; but on Thursday night, April 30th, it broke the point off from one of its wings, and eat it up. Friday night, May 1st, it broke off the other point and commenced devouring it, but I soon found it at its work of self-destruction and killed it. During its captivity of five days, it eat none of the leaves placed in its prison fresh, and when I killed it, it appeared as active as though it had a plenty of its favorite food. Is it natural for them to destroy themselves if kept in confinement? Or was it for want of its natural food? And what is its natural food?"

The Luna and other moths of the Silk-worm family (Bombycidæ) do not eat or take food except in the larva state, as the mouth-parts (tongue and mandibles) are aborted. Nearly all moths suck in the nectar of flowers and other sweets, but never use their jaws, which are obsolete, though well developed in the caterpillar. Did not your Luna break off her tail, and did not the fragment disappear in some other way than down her throat, which in the winged state is not adapted for swallowing, as she only lives long enough to go through a brief courtship and lay her eggs for her future progeny, taking no food during the few days of her moth-hood. The caterpillar feeds on the maple and other trees.

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BOOKS RECEIVED.

Observations on the Metamorphosis of Siredon into Amblystoma. By Prof. O. C. Marsh. With a plate. New Haven, 1868. 8vo, pp. 12.

Outlines of Comparative Anatomy and Medical Zoölogy. By Harrison Allen, M. D. Philadelphia, 1869. 8vo, pp. 190.

The Canadian Entomologist. Vol. I, No. 4. November, 1868.

The Field. October 3 to November 21. London.

Synopsis of the Birds of South Carolina. By Elliott Coues, M. D. Boston, 1868. 8vo, pp. 23.

American Bee Journal. December, 1868. Washington, D. C.

Report on the Trials of Plows, held at Utica. Albany, 1868. 8vo.

Land and Water. August 8 to October 31, 1868. London.

Some Recent Additions to the Fauna of California. By J. G. Cooper, M. D. (From the Proceedings of the California Academy of Science, January, 1868.) 8vo, pp. 11.

Cosmos. October 3 to November 14, 1868. Paris.